

Translated from Spanish

PERMANENT MISSION OF CUBA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

New York

28 February 1963

No. 150

Sir,

On the instructions of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba, I have the honour to transmit below the text of a note sent by Dr. Raúl Roa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, to Mr. Miloslav Ruzek, Ambassador of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the United States of America, and I should be grateful if you would arrange for this letter to be circulated as an official document of the United Nations.

"His Excellency Mr. Miloslav Ruzek,

"Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
to the United States of America,

"Washington, D.C.

"Sir,

"On the instructions of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba, I have the honour to request that the Embassy of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, as representative of Cuba's interests in the United States, submit to the Department of State of the Government of the United States of America the text of the following note, which is a reply to the Department's note of 21 February 1963.

"The Revolutionary Government of Cuba categorically rejects the entire contents of the note of protest sent by the Government of the United States of America in connexion with the alleged attack by two reconnaissance aircraft of the Cuban Air Force on a United States fishing vessel in international waters.

His Excellency U Thant,
Secretary-General of the United Nations,
New York.

The false and tendentious version of the facts given in that note is merely a vain attempt to cover up and justify a policy of force and, in particular, the uninterrupted series of acts of piracy that the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency have been committing, in violation of the right of self-determination, the sovereignty and the independence of the Cuban people and with blatant disregard for the most elementary rules of international law and the principles of the United Nations. The hypocrisy which is typical of the foreign policy of the Government of the United States of America has been exposed in the clearest possible light in the note in question.

"The account which follows is strictly in accordance with the facts.

"On 20 February 1963, in the afternoon, two reconnaissance aircraft of the Cuban Air Force were searching the area north of our coast for two Cuban vessels of the Sigma class belonging to the Cardenas Fishing Co-operative, which had been attacked, boarded and seized on 14 February in the vicinity of Cayo Roque by a band of pirates in the service of the Central Intelligence Agency. These aircraft sighted a small vessel flying no flag which looked like one of the Sigma class, and went down low enough to try and identify it, but did not fire a single shot at it or commit any hostile act. When they found that it was not the Cuban vessel they were looking for, the two aircraft immediately flew away from the area and continued their search. The story that the aircraft withdrew upon the arrival of six United States Navy aircraft in the area is an apocryphal addendum to the melodrama deliberately manufactured by the State Department on the basis of the episode.

"It is not unlikely, moreover, that in the situation which the United States Government has created and in which international law is disregarded there will be further incidents of this kind. The United States Government itself has been obliged to recognize that the vessel in question was not flying any flag.

"The facts given above lead to certain undeniable conclusions: first, the reconnaissance aircraft of the Cuban Air Force were engaged in a search; second, their only purpose in flying low over the United States Fishing vessel, which was flying no flag and looked like the Sigma class, was to try and

identify it; third, upon discovering that it was not the vessel they were trying to find, both aircraft climbed again and flew off. Thus, it is absolutely untrue that there was any premeditation or that there was an attack, and it is also untrue, therefore, that the reconnaissance operation in question was a violation of international law. The right which the Cuban aircraft had and still have to carry out searches in the international waters adjacent to our coasts for vessels seized by bands of pirates in the service of a foreign Power is an essential element in the exercise of full sovereignty and cannot in any way conflict with international law, which expressly condemns and penalizes acts of piracy. The Revolutionary Government of Cuba does not have to give explanations of any kind regarding the measures it adopts in self-defence against acts of aggression and piracy committed by the Government which demands such explanations.

"Furthermore, the Cuban fishing vessels which the two reconnaissance aircraft were looking for were recovered by the Revolutionary Navy, which, in the course of this operation, captured the members of a band of pirates coming from Cay Elbow, a United Kingdom possession to which the vessels in question had been taken and where CIA had left the arms that they were trying to take into Cuba. The eight pirates who were captured admitted being agents of CIA. Three of them confessed to having taken part in attacking, boarding and seizing the two Cuban fishing vessels, and added that the gunboat used had set out from Florida. They also said that a third Cuban fishing vessel that had been seized had sunk upon being thrown by the waves against the rocks of Cay Elbow. Upon being questioned, they stated that the purpose of such seizures was that the Cuban fishing vessels should be used to facilitate their illegal incursions into Cuba with arms and CIA agents sent to infiltrate the country. They stated that their specific task was to organize a counter-revolutionary band in the north of the province of Las Villas. They added that other bands of pirates organized by CIA were stationed in Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Costa Rica and had a very active base on Cay Estocairan in Florida and that the groups operating out of Santurce, Puerto Rico, had two fast boats armed with non-recoiling cannons manufactured in the United States.

The statements made by the captives, the documents taken from them and the United States weapons that they were trying to take into Cuba all provide further confirmation that the Government of the United States of America is directly responsible for these acts of international piracy.

"A complete account of such acts and the violations of Cuba's airspace and territorial waters before, during and after the illegal blockade which brought the world to the verge of a thermo-nuclear war would fill a voluminous work. It will be sufficient, however, for the purposes of this note, to establish the responsibility of the United States by citing the following incidents:

"12 May 1962 - A pirate gunboat based in the United States and belonging to the counter-revolutionary organization Alpha-66 attacked a patrol vessel of the Revolutionary Navy. Three members of the crew of the Cuban vessel were killed in the action, and three others were wounded.

"24 August 1962 - Two pirate gunboats, coming from the United States territory and belonging to the counter-revolutionary organization just mentioned, attacked the Hotel Sierra Maestra, which is situated on the beach in the Miramar district of Havana. They fired cannon and machine-guns at various parts of the building, thus endangering the lives of the families living in the hotel and in other dwellings in the area.

"18 September 1962 - A pirate vessel, belonging to the same organization and coming from United States territory, attacked two Cuban boats and the United Kingdom merchant ship New Lane, which was loading sugar, at the Cayo Francés wharves, opposite the port of Caibarién, in the Province of Las Villas.

"8 October 1962 - A pirate vessel, coming from United States territory, strafed the beach of the port of Isabela de Sagua.

"4 December 1962 - Two pirate vessels, coming from United States territory, attacked Juan Francisco beach, thirty kilometres from the port of Caibarién in the Province of Las Villas.

"13 October 1962 - A pirate boat, coming from United States territory, attacked a Cuban pleasure boat opposite Cayo Elanco, at the mouth of Cárdenas Bay, seizing two members of the militia, Filiberto Suárez Lima and Miguel Cao Medina.

The other two members of the crew of the Cuban vessel were able to swim back to shore. The militiamen were taken by the pirates to Miami, Florida, United States of America.

"9 February 1963 - Two United States F-100 military jet aircraft, bearing the markings of the United States Air Force, fired bursts of machine-gun fire at Cayo Francés, a sugar wharf situated twenty-five kilometres north-east of the port of Caibarién in the Province of Las Villas. At the time when this criminal act occurred, about 100 Cuban workers and several Soviet technicians were engaged in drilling wells in search of oil. The pirate aircraft fled north when their attack was countered by the personnel of the Revolutionary Navy stationed in Cayo Francés.

"13 February 1963 - The two Sigma vessels belonging to the Cárdenas Fishing Co-operative were attacked, boarded and seized by a gunboat coming from United States territory, the brothers Armando and Ramón López Ruiz being wounded in the attack. The vessels were recovered by the Revolutionary Navy when their crews were trying to take a cargo of United States arms into the country, and three of the captured crew-members admitted having taken part in this outrage.

"These facts clearly demonstrate that the Government of the United States of America, and not the Government of Cuba, is violating international law by attacking, either directly or through its agents, the territory of another State; that the Government of the United States of America, and not the Government of Cuba, is organizing pirate expeditions in order to seize vessels of another State and eventually use them for the infiltration of weapons and agents of CIA; that the Government of the United States of America, and not the Government of Cuba, is violating the air space and territorial waters of another State, with absolute disregard for international law and the Charter of the United Nations; that the Government of the United States of America, and not the Government of Cuba, must give an immediate and precise accounting of all its acts of aggression and its violation of Cuba's right of self-determination and of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Cuba; that, in conclusion, it is the Government of Cuba which formally protests most

energetically against the policy of force of the Government of the United States of America and which declares its resolute determination to take whatever action it considers advisable for the defence of the Nation."

"Accept, sir, the assurances of my highest consideration."

(Signed) PAUL ROA

Accept, sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Dr. Paul PRIMEVILLES
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative
